

Remarks

Claims 1-20 are pending in the application. Claims 4, 6, 7, 11, 14 and 17-20 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1-3, 5, 8-10, 12, 13, 15 and 16 are rejected. By this paper, claims 1, 3, 4, 6-11 and 13-16 are amended. In addition, claims 17-20 are canceled. Based on the following, consideration of the amended claims, and reconsideration of the remaining claims, are requested.

Election/Restrictions

Applicants hereby confirm the election of the embodiment of Figure 2 without traverse, as indicated in the Summary of the telephonic interview conducted with the Examiner on October 6, 2004.

Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings, indicating that they do not include the label "48" described as "edge 48" on page six of the specification. This label was included on the informal drawings filed with the application, but was inadvertently omitted when formal drawings were made. By this paper, Figure 3 is amended to include the previously omitted label.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 8-10, 12-13 and 15-16 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. For each of the claims rejected under § 112, the Examiner suggested language that would help to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In each case, the Examiner's suggested language has been incorporated into the claims, and it is believed that each of the pending claims satisfies § 112.

In addition to the claims being examined, the Examiner also provided suggested language for claims 4, 6, 7, 11 and 14, which are drawn to a non-elected species, and are therefore withdrawn from consideration. In an effort to expedite prosecution, Applicants have amended each of these claims in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. If a generic base claim is allowed for any of these claims, it is requested that the Examiner examine the amended version of such claim or claims.

With regard to the § 112 rejections, the Examiner also stated that claim 11 appeared to be inconsistent with its base claim. Specifically, the Examiner stated that it was not clear that claim 11, which appeared to be drawn to the embodiment of Figure 9, would define "integrally formed" walls. Applicants note that claim 10, the base claim for claim 11, recites "two opposing side walls integrally formed with the first wall and extending outward therefrom...." Amended claim 11 recites that "each of the reinforcing members includes a channel disposed along a length of the reinforcing member, each of the channels being configured to receive the distal edge of a corresponding one of the side walls." Therefore, it is the reinforcing members which include a channel to receive an edge of the side wall, and the side walls which are integrally formed with a first wall, an example of which would be the bed liner floor. Applicants believe that the foregoing explanation should dispel any appearance of inconsistency; however, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned if additional explanation is required.

Claim Rejections—35 U.S.C. § 102

The Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5, 10 and 12-13 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,253,918 (Wood et al.). At the outset it is noted that in addition to the amendments addressing the § 112 rejections, claims 1 and 10 have further been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. In particular, amended claims 1 and 10 each recite "a pair of reinforcing members," where each of the reinforcing members includes "a plurality of threaded holes therein, wherein the threads of the threaded holes are formed in the reinforcing members." This is in contrast

to the truck bed liner described in Wood et al., which may include a washer or nut formed into the truck bed liner (Col. 4, ll. 32-33.) Thus, the truck bed liner of Wood et al. requires an accessory, such as a nut, to provide the threads to attach a screw or bolt. This is in contrast to the present invention as recited in amended claims 1 and 10, which includes threaded holes having threads formed in the reinforcing members themselves. One example of such threaded holes is shown in Figure 3 of the present application. The invention as recited in amended claims 1 and 10 provides advantages over the truck bed liner described in the cited reference, including eliminating a need for an accessory such as a nut. Amended claims 1 and 10 each contain elements which are neither expressly nor inherently described in Wood et al.

Amended claim 1 is the base claim for claims 2, 3 and 5. Similarly, amended claim 10 is the base claim for claims 12 and 13. Each of these dependent claims contains all of the limitations of its respective base claim, as well as additional limitations which further distinguish it from the cited reference. Therefore, it is submitted that none of these dependent claims is anticipated by Wood et al.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner stated that claims 8-9 and 15-16 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, and to include all of the limitations of their respective base claims and any intervening claims. As noted above, amended claims 1 and 10 are believed to be allowable, and these are the respective base claims for claims 8-9 and 15-16. Therefore, it is believed that claims 8-9 and 15-16 are also allowable.

Claims 4, 6, 7, 11 and 14 are drawn to a non-elected species; however, each has amended claim 1 or amended claim 10 as its base claim. Amended claims 1 and 10 are generic, and as noted above, are believed to be allowable. Therefore, examination of claims 4, 6, 7, 11 and 14, as amended by this paper, is respectfully requested.

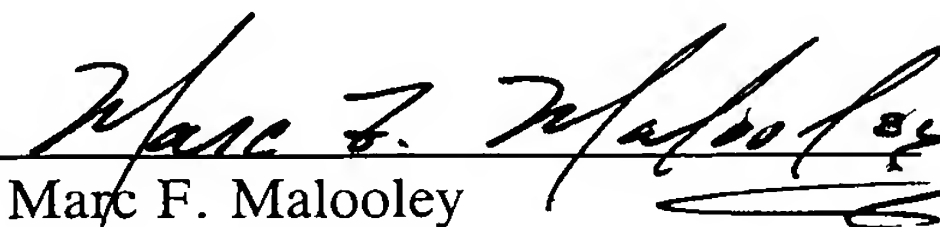
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Reply to Office Action of October 14, 2004

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Based on the foregoing, allowance of each of the pending claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 3. This sheet, which includes Figs. 3-5, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 3-5.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet